

FALL 2013 Alumni Columns

3101-2018

MAY, 1938

OCT 26 1959

ALUMNI COLUMNS

NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA

VOL. XIX, No. 1 NORTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA SEPTEMBER 1959

New Lights, Extra Seats for Stadium

NEW LIGHTS, EXTRA SEATS FOR STUDENTS

An entirely new lighting system has been provided for the Demon Stadium this summer, together with an additional 1,000 to 1,200 seats.

The new lights have been mounted on poles behind the stadium seats and are at a lower level than the original lights. The removal of the light poles from in front of the spectators has improved the view of the field. In addition, the new lights give more brilliant illumination of the playing field. Pictured at the left is one of the light poles being raised into position by a large crane. With the new system, the illumination is about four times greater than that of the former system.

**SUMMER ENROLLMENT
TOPS RECORD**

A new record for summer enrollment was established this year when 1602 undergraduates and 541 graduate students

New seats, to take care of approximately 1,200 persons, have been erected on the west side of the football field. These additional seats, pictured, above, are of steel construction built upon a solid concrete base. They are available for use when needed as needed, or rather when funds can be found to make the necessary

Director of Health Policy, Planning, and Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; Samuel R. Gennep, Instructor of Journalism and Assistant Director of News Bureau at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Floyd L. Judd, Assistant Professor of Physics, Director of the Center for the Study of the History of Science and Technology, and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and John

Present plans call for seating the band and the cheering section on the east side, at least the freshman students, since it would be difficult to seat all students on the west side.

HOMECOMING DAY—SATURDAY, NOV. 7

LUMNI



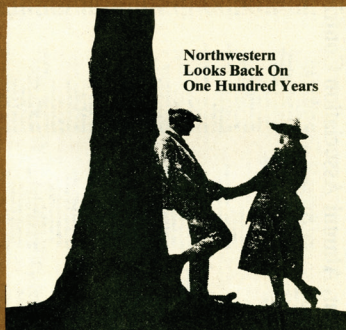
COLUMNS

NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY



Winter, 1972

 Northwestern State University
ALUMNI COLUMNS
Natchitoches, Louisiana Winter, 1983



Northwestern Looks Back On One Hundred Years

Celebration of a Century
1884~1984



 Northwestern State University
ALUMNI COLUMNS
Natchitoches, Louisiana Winter 1987



Northwestern State University
A Member of the University of Louisiana System
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Alumni
C O L U M N S
Magazine



Northwestern State University of Louisiana

ALUMNI COLUMNS

Magazine Spring 2000

Discovering & Understanding
Research at NSU

Thru the Columns

Magazine Winter 2010
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

W25
1884-2009

Alumni Columns
SUMMER 2012
Northwestern State University Magazine





*Dr. Randall J. Webb,
1965, 1966
President
Northwestern State
University*

Dear Alumni,

In my role as president, I am continually humbled by the generosity of alumni and friends of Northwestern State University. So many people with a connection to the university have a deep commitment to seeing this institution and its students succeed.

Among these alumni are Ellis and Juanita Coutee. The Coutees have shown how much they care about this institution on many occasions. They have assisted our faculty by establishing four endowed professorships and were instrumental in setting up two other professorships. Ellis and Juanita have created scholarships for students in accounting, mathematics and nursing and contribute to the university each year. Recently, they made a donation to create Marla Renee Coutee Thurman Endowed Memorial Scholarships in nursing in memory of their daughter who lost a battle with cancer earlier this year. Thank you to Ellis and Juanita Coutee for being there to help our students and faculty.

Another alumna who is making an impact is Jo Pease. In 1971, Jo, along with fellow alumni Val Marmillion and Karl White, founded a summer leadership program called the Louisiana Youth Seminar. The program has been a major success, helping more than 9,000 high school students in Louisiana learn leadership skills and to believe in themselves.

With the start of the new academic year, the university has been able to rehabilitate historic Caspari Hall for use as an administration building. I am privileged to have an office in this building that is an important part of Northwestern State history. The renovated Caspari Hall is part of the university's plan to consolidate offices that serve students in a way that makes it more convenient for them.

I am looking forward to a wonderful 2013-14 academic year. I hope you can join us for Homecoming and on other special occasions. Thank you for all you do to assist Northwestern State.



*Dr. Chris Maggio,
1985, 1991
Assistant Vice
President of External
Affairs for University
Advancement*

Dear Alumni,

As I write this, just days before the start of the Fall semester, we have much to look forward to.

By the time you read this, our new freshman class will have settled in on campus and our new Vic the Demon will have made his debut. We are already planning activities and events for Homecoming 2013, set for Oct. 18-19. A new feature this year is a downtown Rocking on the Riverbank, a Northwestern State Homecoming Festival, following the annual parade and pep rally. The Homecoming schedule of events is on back cover of this magazine and I hope you plan to join other alumni on campus that weekend.

2014 is going to be a special year in Natchitoches as we celebrate the city's Tricentennial. It's not too early to note on your calendar a special event we are planning for the spring, the President's Command Performance on April 4. This event will showcase many programs in the school of Creative and Performing Arts. More information about this will be available as details are finalized.

Remember, you can always stay current on campus happenings and events by logging onto our website at nsula.edu and liking us on Facebook. Extended editions of Alumni Columns are also accessible online at northwesternalumni.com.

As always, I thank you for your support of Northwestern State University and hope to see you on campus soon.

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HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

Stationed in Afghanistan, NSU alumni show Demon pride

Three Northwestern State alumni took a break from duty to provide an update on their current deployment in Kuwait and Afghanistan. Maj. Kenneth B. Capello, Cpt. Chris Kegerreis and Capt. Kinshasa Romas are serving with the 204th Tactical Aviation Operations Group (TAOG) deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and requested a Northwestern State University flag and caps, which were shipped over by the Office of Alumni Affairs. They are with the Louisiana Army National Guard out of Pineville.

"As you can imagine we try to do as much as we can to stay in touch with home and our loved ones."

—Maj. Kenneth B. Capello

Capello graduated in 1993 with a degree in business administration and a minor in military science.

"I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1990 through the NSU ROTC department," he said. "I spent the last 23 years in the Army National Guard as a May Day soldier performing various duties, some of which include command, battalion staff and JFHQ staff, just to name a few," he said.

Capello works fulltime for the State Military Department Youth Challenge Program at Camp Beauregard in Pineville.

Capello said most of his time at Northwestern was spent at the ROTC building training and doing fund raisers for the program, but he also remembers The Body and Sassy's as "hot spots back when I was in school."

"The ROTC back then always partici-



Cpt. Chris Kegerreis, Maj. Kenneth Capello and Cpt. Kinshasa Romas showed their NSU pride in front of a UH 60 Helicopter.

pated in intramural sports. We had a softball team and a flag football team and I have some fun memories of playing sports," he said.

Kegerreis, a native of Alexandria, graduated from Northwestern State in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in science. He enlisted in July 2004 and is an aviation officer, UH-60 Black Hawk Pilot.

"I've been on multiple deployments to different parts of the middle east in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. I have also been activated for numerous stateside response missions," he said. Kegerreis said his fondest Northwestern memory – besides graduation – is the semester he spend participating in the Walt Disney College Program in Orlando, Fla.

Romas was born in New Orleans, attended middle and high school in Lake Charles and transferred to Northwest-

ern from McNeese State University in 2001, enrolling in ROTC the next semester. Romas graduated and was commissioned in 2003

"I have a bachelor's degree in education technology and an associate degree in aviation science. During my time at Northwestern I was a member of Student Actives Board, I was elected Senior Senator for the Student Government Association, I was the president of Phi Beta Sigma (Zeta Iota chapter), I was also a gold key member. I branch Aviation and I am qualified in several military helicopters (OH-58 A/C, UH-60 Blackhawk, UH-72 Lakota). I am currently deployed in the middle east as the HHC Commander for the 20th TAOG about 10 months," Romas said.

Reminiscing about Northwestern "was a lot of fun for us," Capello said. "It brought back some fun memories of our time at NSU and Natchitoches."

Columns and other NSU publications going digital

Our stories, our perspectives, archived online

In commemoration of its 75th anniversary, *Alumni Columns* has gone digital. Northwestern State's 80,000 alumni can now access back issues of *Alumni Columns* through an Internet archive that will soon be accessible through the university's Traditions website.

For now, users can link to the following: archive.org/details/lyrasis

"Publications over the past years are our best documentation as how Northwestern became what it is today," said Tom Whitehead (1967), coordinator of special projects for Northwestern and former student media advisor. "With the decrease in the cost of scanning and digital storage space, the reality of placing all our publication online has become possible."

First published in May 1938, *Alumni Columns* was intended to promote "a close and live relationship between the Normal College and its sons and daughters," wrote the first *Columns* editor S.W. Nelken (1920). Early editors envisioned a forum to inform Northwestern graduates about life on the campus they left behind -- beloved professors retired or passed away, buildings burned and new ones were constructed, programs were discontinued and new ones introduced, athletic teams experienced highs and lows. The magazine has over the years served as a family journal of sorts, announcing births, marriages, retirements, promotions, as well as proposed changes to the campus landscape -- some that came to fruition, others that didn't.

Northwestern is in the process of digitizing *Potpourri* yearbooks, *Argus* literary magazines and *Current Sauce* newspapers. The process was coordinated through Lyrasis, a non-profit organization in Atlanta, Ga., with the actual scanning of NSU publications

They Have Served Normal For A Quarter Of A Century



Seated, left to right, Misses Russell, Feltus and Varnado; standing, left to right, Messrs. Fournet, Prather, and Winstead.

Six Faculty Members Have Been Here Twenty-five Years or More

Although it is not the privilege of many college professors to have the opportunity to guide the destiny of students over a period of twenty-five years, these six instructors at the Louisiana State Normal College have taught the teachers of Louisiana for a quarter of a century.

It must be a happy thought to feel that students everywhere look back with keen pleasure upon the association with former teachers. These six men and women have given the best part of their lives to equip better the youth of Louisiana to become leaders of tomorrow. The entire Alumni Association wishes them continued long life and service. Normal's "Silver Jubilee" Teachers are (Dates indicate when they came to Normal):

Miss Dean E. Varnado, Dean of Women and Associate Professor of History, 1905

R. W. Winstead, Associate Professor of Latin, 1908

Alumni Columns, 1938

at Princeton University in New Jersey. Copies of each publication were collected, shipped, scanned and returned to the NSU Archives. *Alumni Columns*, *Potpourri* and *Argus* were made accessible earlier this year. *Current Sauce* newspapers will be available in December.

"The media have offered to pay the cost for archival storage so all the *Potpourris* since 1909, *Argus* literary magazine since the late 1970s, our *Alumni Columns* since the late 1930s and the *Current Sauce*, celebrating its 100 year of continuous publication since 1914, have been scanned at no cost to the university," Whitehead said. "In one way the scanned copies are better than the originals because they are searchable. Go to the 1934 *Potpourri* and through the Search function, you

will be able to see Grandma participating in her clubs, classes and campus activities. Most of the publications are not indexed so this opens up the resources to much easier access."

Potpourris, *Argus*, *Alumni Columns* and *Current Sauce* issues are digitally stored at the Internet Archives. To make finding and accessing them easier, the sites are linked to the Traditions page on the nsula.edu website. Users can tap the Traditions button to find a homepage where the files are accessed.

Northwestern State is the first public four-year college in Louisiana to digitally archive its student publications.

Dr. Chris Maggio, assistant vice president of External Affairs, said the project and searchable archive benefits all members of the NSU family.

Miss Scharlie Russell, Librarian and Associate Professor of Library Science, 1910

F. G. Fournet, Head of Department of Science and Professor of Physics, 1913

H. Lee Prather, Dean of Students and Professor of Political Science, 1913

Miss Martha Feltus, Associate Professor of History, 1913.

The Broadcasting Studio

The Louisiana State Normal College during the year installed a broadcasting studio and broadcasts by remote control through station KALB in Alexandria, Louisiana. The station was installed through the untiring efforts of Professor Otis R. Crew. The broadcasting station here facilitates in promoting radio broadcasts among schools and civic organizations of the state, and also offers splendid opportunities to encourage and develop abilities that would not be reached otherwise. Talent at the Louisiana State Normal College is also given an opportunity to express itself.

Through the cooperation of E. H. Haynes, District Advisor of the F. F. A., practically all of the Agriculture Schools in the ninth district have participated in broadcasting at the college. These schools are listed by parishes: Natchitoches, Provencal, Kisatchie, Flora, Marthaville, Ajax, Readhimer, Ashland, Robeline, and Gorum. Sabine Parish: Florian, Hornbeck, Many, Mt. Carmel, Negreet, Pleasant Hill, Converse, Zwolle, Ebarb, Belmont, and Plain Dealing; Beauregard Parish—Merryville; Vernon Parish—Simpson, Evans, and Rosepine.

Other schools taking part in the broadcasts are Cypress, Calvin, Bellwood, Oakdale, Cloutierville, Ida, Sikes, St. Mary's Academy, Winnfield, Dodson, Mora, and Atlanta.

Much interest has been shown in these broadcasts throughout the state. The fan mail has mounted to as much as 435 cards and letters in one mail.

Broadcasts for the summer and fall are now being scheduled. Schools throughout the state are urged to take advantage of this opportunity.

Any school that might be interested in appearing on a program should communicate with Professor O. R. Crew, Director of Radio Broadcasts.

Page Sixteen

continued on page 3

Making An Impact

After more than 40 years, Louisiana Youth Seminar is still empowering young people to become leaders

Jo Pease's passion is helping young people develop leadership skills and learn to believe in themselves. Because of that passion, she has for more than 40 years devoted much of her time and energy to a program that encourages youth to develop their potential to succeed and achieve goals. Pease and two other Northwestern State alums – Val Marmillion (1971) and Karl White (1969) – cofounded a summer leadership program, the Louisiana Youth Seminar, in 1971 that has since empowered more than 9,000 high school students from throughout Louisiana.

“Having one person believe in you and reach out a helping hand to give you a shot can have a huge effect. Each year, I am touched by the students who come to LYS as they tell me how much LYS has impacted them.”

—Jo Pease

Louisiana Youth Seminar is held every July during a week in which high school juniors and seniors are grouped with other students they don't know and participate in activities that focus on leadership skills, understanding and accepting others, developing self confidence and problem solving. LYS attracts students with diverse talents, interests and socio-economic backgrounds and many have gone on to succeed in business, government, science, medicine, academia and other professional fields.

“They have a series of friendly competitions to learn teambuilding, how to set and achieve goals, communication skills, how to conduct meetings, group dynamics. They end up dropping the façade they often carry in a high school environment,” she explained. “What we really try to do is to create a safe environment and encourage everybody to bring forth their own leadership abilities. There is no failure.”

Pease and Marmillion were undergraduates and White was a graduate student at Northwestern when they cofounded the seminar.

“Val and I were close friends and we were very involved at Northwestern together,” she said, listing the class offices each held. He had attended Louisiana Boys State and she Louisiana Girls State and each participated in those programs as counselors, but hatched the idea of a different type of youth camp, to be sponsored through Northwestern's newly-formed Student Union Governing Board.

“We wanted to create our own camp that was coed and not so much focused on government but on developing leadership skills,” she said. Student Union Director Robert Wilson Sr. supported the idea and assigned his graduate as-



Karl White, Jo Pease and Val Marmillion, 1980

sistant, White, to help launch the program.

Pease had a personal reason for encouraging young people to believe in themselves. As a high achieving student at Springhill High School, an administrator told her she was not smart enough to go to college. However, her English teacher's husband was acquainted with Dr. Arnold Kilpatrick, then president of Northwestern State, and arranged for the two to meet. Pease enrolled as an accounting major with a work scholarship in the financial aid office and later earned an academic scholarship. In addition to student government, she was involved in Purple Jacket, Sigma Kappa Sorority and campus organizations that provided many opportunities to develop

her own leadership skills. She graduated in 1973 and went on to earn an MBA at Yale University.

Her upbringing had a tremendous influence on her work ethic.

“I grew up knowing I had to work hard. I was able to go to college. My strength is perseverance. I just don't give up,” she said.

Pease was the chief ethics and compliance officer and the director of the Ethics and Compliance Office for Shell in the United States until her retirement from a long career in management roles for Shell. In 2000, she established Shell's first Ethics and Compliance Office as well as the company's overall Ethics and Compliance program for all Shell companies operating in the United States. In 2005 and 2006, she served as a consultant to the Royal Dutch Shell Compliance Officer, as RDS initiated additional focus on a global compliance program to cover 120,000 employees in 140 countries. Today, she consults in the area of ethics and compliance to a variety of companies.

A Houston resident, she has been involved with numerous professional and community organizations and was named one of 10 Women on the Move by Texas Executive Women. She was inducted into Northwestern State's Alumni Hall of Distinction, the Long Purple Line, in 2006. In 2010, she was given the LYS Life Achievement Award for 40 years of dedication to Louisiana's youth. Pease is married to Timothy English and has three stepchildren.

Her devotion to LYS never waned, even while advancing in a high-stress corporate career.

“I'm the mother of LYS,” she laughed. “When you're 19 and decide to do something, you just do it. I'm not sure we expected it to keep going for 43 years.”

Since her retirement six years ago, she is focused LYS recruiting, fundraising and creating an endowment for the seminar.

“Fifty percent of my time is spent on LYS and 40 percent is spent on consulting, so I can donate back to LYS. That is how I fundraise.”

continued on page 5



Jo Pease

Making an Impact continued from page 4

Aside from a paid part-time director, LYS is organized, staffed and directed by young volunteer professionals and college students who participated in the seminar as delegates. The staff is positive and progressive and can easily identify with the hopes, feelings and trends of Louisiana's youth. Pease said LYS has received broad support from Louisiana businesses and individuals.

The first year's seminar drew 99 students. At year 41, the program had 252 and this year had more than 330. Marmillion and White, who also went on to highly successful careers, stayed involved until year 10 and afterwards returned for landmark 30- and 40- year sessions.

Pease has many stories and testimonies from delegates who say their week at LYS changed – and in some cases saved – their lives. The program counters peer pressure, which for the modern teen is intensified by social media.

"I want each delegate to walk away with self confidence and believe in who they are," Pease said. "The LYS motto is 'No man is an island.' I wanted to make a difference in the lives of young leaders."

For more information on Louisiana Youth Seminar, visit louisianayouth-seminar.org.



Several family members attended the ceremony for LTC Huggins. From left are nephew Austin Schexnaider, sister Terrie Schexnaider, wife Marcella Huggins, LTC Sean Huggins, daughter Gillian Huggins, mother Kim Holloway, stepfather Robert Holloway and daughter Sarah Warren.

1995 grad takes command of Houston U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion

LTC Sean Huggins (1995) took command of the U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion in Houston during a ceremony at Ellington Field June 21. The Battalion locates and recruits soldiers from an area covering nearly 40,000 square miles and an estimated population of 5.2 million, including the Houston metro area to an area surrounding Tyler Texas; Beaumont, Texas; Galveston, Texas, and Bryan, Texas.

LTC Huggins earned his commission through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps as a Distinguished Military Graduate from Northwestern State with service in the U.S. Army Aviation Branch. As a freshman at Northwestern State, he was a member of the Spirit of Northwestern Demon Marching Band. He joined ROTC in 1990, excelled during all of his training and culminated his student experience as the Demon Regiment's Cadet Battalion Commander in 1994.

Over his past 18 years on active duty, LTC Huggins has served numerous positions of increased responsibility and been stationed globally. Highlights of assignments include Aviation Platoon Leader, Bravo Company, 4-227th Aviation Regiment, Fort Hood, Texas, during Stabilization Forces-4, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Aviation Troop Commander, 1- 158th Aviation Regiment, Fort Hood, during Operation Iraqi Freedom II; Aviation Battalion Operations Officer, Headquarters, 2-227th Aviation Regiment, Fort Hood, during Operation Iraqi Freedom 09-10; Aviation Brigade Operations Officer, Headquarters, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, Fort Hood, during initial deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom and most recently as the Current Operations Officer for the Joint Intelligence Directorate, United States Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany.

Huggins is married to the former Marcella Aratlejo of Phoenix, Ariz., and has four daughters.

Huggins noted that his cousin, Hailey Huggins, is a current NSU student and will graduate in 2015 with a degree in hospitality management and tourism.

Spotlights



Becky Green, center

Becky Ann Ducote Green (1993, 1995) was named the top Air Force manpower and personnel flight chief of the year by the personnel chief at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi.

Green, 81st Force Support Squadron, leads a 68-member flight that includes military and civilian members and is responsible for planning, development and execution of Keesler's manpower and personnel programs to meet peacetime and wartime requirements.

Green began her Air Force career in 1995 as a Palace Acquire education and training intern and served at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska; Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea; Hickam AFB, Hawaii; and Kadena and Misawa ABs, Japan. At Misawa, her team won the 2003 Pacific Air Force award for excellence in educational programs.

Green arrived at Keesler in 2003 as education services officer. In 2006, her team garnered the 2006 Air Force award for excellence in educational programs. She was selected for her current position in 2008, and the civilian personnel and manpower sections won their respective award categories at Air Education and Training Command for that year. The manpower section repeated the win in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

In 2012, Green was the 81st Mission Support Group's nominee for civilian supervisor of the year for 2012 and is Keesler's representative to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Gulf Coast program. She was credited with \$340,000 in dining hall upgrades and \$449,000 increase in morale, welfare and recreation funding. She developed an aggressive club membership initiative that drove a 15.9 percent new member increase, the best in the Air Force.

Green navigated Air Force directed personnel cuts, overcoming 107 position losses with a 94 percent placement rate. She networked with the state employment commission to conduct 12 mini job fairs that netted 1,500 applications. She also used the Department of Labor's workforce recruitment program, employing eight people and saving the Air Force \$480,000.

Green earned a bachelor's degree in English education and a graduate degree in Student Personnel Services at

Northwestern State, where she was also a member of Sigma Kappa Sorority.

Lt. Col. Stuart A. Kidder, commander, 30th Adjutant General Battalion, 192nd Infantry Brigade relinquished command during a change of command ceremony at Pomeroy Field, Fort Benning, Ga., in June. Kidder enlisted in the Army in 1986 and was assigned as a combat medic with 3rd Battalion, 70th Armor, 5th Infantry Division, at Fort Polk, La.

He graduated as a distinguished military graduate from Northwestern State University and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Adjutant General Corps in 1991.

Kidder holds a master's degree in military operational art and science, a master's degree in organizational management, and a baccalaureate's degree in business administration. Kidder assumed command of the 30th Adjutant General Battalion, 192nd Infantry Brigade in 2011.

Linda Russell of League City, Texas, was appointed to Texas Judicial Compensation Commission by Texas Governor Rick Perry. The commission recommends the salaries of state judges. Russell is CEO of the Woman's Hospital of Texas. She is member of the American and Texas Hospital associations, a board member of the Houston March of Dimes and a board and executive committee member of the Gulf Coast Blood Bank. Russell received a bachelor's degree and master's degree in nursing from Northwestern State University. She is reappointed to the commission for a term to expire Feb. 1, 2019.

Michele Margavio (2009) was named academic dean at Northlake Christian School in Covington. Margavio has more than 17 years experience as an educator and has worked in curriculum development and strategic planning for public and private schools. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of New Orleans and a master of education degree in adult education from Northwestern State. She was most recently a teacher in the St. Tammany Parish school system.

Elaine Diesi was appointed assistant vice president of American Bank and Trust. She also serves as a director of the bank and the bank's holding company and is manager of the bank's south branch in Opelousas. She is also a member of the board of directors of ICONS Food Bank. Diesi is a graduate of Opelousas Catholic School and attended Northwestern State University and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She also has participated in numerous education programs related to her banking career.

Kristy Gray Vienne (1999, 2008) was named president of the National Association of Campus Card Users (NACCU), serving the national and international campus card transaction industry.

Vienne received her Bachelor of Arts in business administration with a minor in marketing and Master of Arts in student personnel services at Northwestern State, and her doctorate degree in educational leadership at Sam Houston

State University in Huntsville in May 2010. She serves as the assistant vice president for Student Services at Sam Houston where she oversees Bearkat OneCard Services, Student Money Management Center and Research and Assessment for Student Services, Staff Development, and serves as technology liaison for her division. She is involved in the educational and research components of the card profession and the area of financial literacy in higher education, having published in both professional and academic journals on both topics.

She will also serve as chair of Sam Houston's Staff Council for the 2013-14 fiscal year.

Thomas H. McClelland II was named Athletic Director at Louisiana Tech University last July. McClelland previously spent six years as Athletic Director at McNeese State University. McClelland was a walk-on football player and javelin thrower at Northwestern, where he earned his undergraduate degree in general studies in 2004 and a master's degree in sports administration in 2005.

Dr. Cherissa LeGrendre Vitter was named Citizen of the Year by the Hammond Rotary Club. Vitter is an administrator at Hammond High Magnet School and was chosen for the honor for coordinating certification of HHMS as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School in a record 18 months. The IB Diploma Program is a two-year education program aimed at 16- to 19-year-olds that provides an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education.

In the process, HHMS earned an almost unheard of perfect score from IB assessors during interviews of students, faculty and administrators. Vitter and her team worked seven days a week for months to assemble the curriculum, prepare students and certify teachers.

A native of New Orleans, Vitter completed music education in 1999 and master of music in music education in 2000 at Northwestern State. She worked in the Dallas area as an International Baccalaureate teacher in the diploma program. She later earned a doctorate in educational leadership at Southeastern Louisiana University and plus-30 in music education at Boston University.

"Upstairs," a musical drama by **Wayne Self**, premiered in June, based on the Upstairs Lounge fire, a notorious arson that killed 32 patrons trapped in a French Quarter bar in 1973. The show opened at Café Istanbul at the New Orleans Healing Center in the Marigny. It's final performance was June 24, the 40th anniversary of the unsolved crime.

A Natchitoches native, Self was a student in the Louisiana Scholars' College from 1987-1995. He lives in Orange County, Calif., and has written three other musical productions, which until recently was a side occupation. He has worked as a web designer and earned a master's degree at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkley, Calif.

Self had moved away from Louisiana before he heard about the Upstairs Lounge fire in which someone doused the wooden stairs leading to the crowded second-floor bar with lighter fluid and set it ablaze. The iron door at the top

of the stairs temporarily contained the fire until someone opened it, allowing the inferno to burst into the barroom. Security bars on the windows prevented most patrons from escaping. The horror of the crime stunned the Crescent City and propelled the largely hidden homosexual subculture into the headlines.

Aspects of the setting and subject set the stage nicely for a musical interpretation of the Upstairs Lounge story, Self said. Although he did not speak to any survivors of the fire, he interviewed relatives of victims and patrons who left the bar before the fire. His research led him down grim pathways, he said, but over time, his interpretation of those who perished changed from victims to richer, more rounded human beings.

More information on the production is available at upstairsmusical.com.

Logan Hampton (1988) was appointed to fill the interim position of vice chancellor for educational, student services and student life at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock as of July 1. Hampton, who has a doctorate in higher education from UALR, earned a master's degree in student personnel

services at Northwestern State and a bachelor's degree in biology from Arkansas Tech University. He is also a graduate of the Harvard Institute of Management and Leadership in Education. Prior to his appointment, he was associate vice chancellor for student development and dean of students at UALR. Before UALR, Hampton held positions at Texas A & M University, Texas Christian University and the University of Central Arkansas.



Logan Hampton



Grady Beard

Grady Beard (1983) was one of seven lawyers from his firm named to the 2014 edition of The Best Lawyers in America, a national publication regarded as the definitive guide to the legal professional in the United States. The honor recognizes Beard as outstanding in his practice area, workers'

compensation law, employers. Beard practices with Sowell Gray Stepp and Laffitte, LLC, in Columbia, S.C.

The Best Lawyers in America is advertisement-free and no fee is required to be included. All attorneys who are included are subject to peer review within both their practice areas and their cities.



Show host Michael Chiarello with Melissa Randall

Baking with Melissa star takes a shot at network show

Melissa Randall may not have been declared the winner on last summer's "Supermarket Superstar," but she is a winner in our book. Randall made cookie cupcakes on the show and created a party-in-a-box baking kit on the Lifetime Network show that follows home chefs as they pitch their product concepts to titans of the food world.

Randall has her own business, Baking with Melissa, that serves her original sweets and offers children's baking parties in the Los Angeles area. Her website is at bakingwithMelissa.com.

"A friend told me about auditions for the show in October," said Randall, a 1996 graduate of Northwestern State's theatre program. "I didn't know if I was ready for something like this. I talked to the producers off and on until February and I found out I made it on the show."

The experience was better than Randall imagined.

"It was fun. I never thought about making food on a large scale," said Randall. "Being on the show was like being in a dream."

"I learned so much about product development and branding, as well as, tips on how to reduce the cost of my product. I had the opportunity to work in a state of the art kitchen with experts in their fields and I just took it all in. The best part of it all, is I was able to create the vision I had for my Kids Baking Kits and I get to keep the product design and logo that I created on the show with 99 designs! I am so excited to see where I can take my branding concept now that the show has aired."

Over the past several months, Randall said she has had many opportunities to be proud of fellow alumni who have appeared on Broadway and on stages around the country, in films as actors and stunt performers and developed successful careers in casting or as teachers.

"It is inspiring and I am proud to have come from the same place as so many amazing people," said Randall. "At Northwestern, I was taught how to do the work, to keep doing the work and never give up. That is what I've done."



Rocking on the Riverbank Homecoming Festival to follow-up downtown pep rally

Homecoming 2013 is slated for Oct. 18-19 and will feature some new attractions for alumni and friends of all ages. Events will begin with Friday's Homecoming parade from campus to the riverbank in downtown Natchitoches where a pep rally and the inaugural Rocking on the Riverbank Homecoming Festival will take place. The Alumni Association has booked MoJeaux (mojeauxband.com) to perform following the pep rally until 10:30 p.m. and will provide a large tent to the left of the stage with tables and chairs and a cash bar where alumni are invited to gather and visit. The Student Activities Board will provide a large tent to the right of the stage with free food for students admitted with their student ID.

Individuals, vendors, students and others will also be allowed to reserve 10 x 10-foot spaces on the riverbank

"We are really excited about this Homecoming event and encourage groups, Greek alumni and others to plan to reserve spaces for get-togethers in a tailgating atmosphere during and after the pep rally. By hosting the event downtown we hope to engage the entire Natchitoches community in our Homecoming festivities and make it a really memorable event," said Haley Blount, associate director of Alumni Affairs.

The 10 x 10 spaces can be accommodated with up to two tables, up to four chairs and electricity, if needed. The cost is \$25 per space and \$50 if electricity is needed. Tents will not be provided.

For more information or to make reservations, contact Blount at (318) 357-4414 or e-mail blounth@nsula.edu. A full schedule of events is printed on the back of this magazine.

ΑΦΑ, ΑΚΑ planning 40th anniversary reunion

The Theta Chi Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and the Eta Chi Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will be celebrating their joint 40th Anniversary during Northwestern State's homecoming celebration. All current and past members are invited to bring their families and reconnect with old and new fraternity and sorority friends.

For details on events contact co-chairs:

Matthew Miles – Alpha Phi Alpha/Theta Chi,
(318) 791-2724, Mattcmiles04@AOL.com;

Leon Potter – Alpha Phi Alpha/Theta Chi,
(214) 415-2967, LPot1432@Verizon.net;

Regina Barnes – Alpha Kappa Alpha/Eta Chi
(318) 332-8190, Reginaj8190@Yahoo.com.

A schedule of events can be found in the Lagniappe section of Alumni Columns posted at northwesternalumni.com.



Dr. James Thibodaux has a new side business that shouldn't surprise those who have long admired his cooking skills. The Natchitoches physician and father of seven is manufacturing a Cajun seasoning rub, fish fry and chick fry that are available at Natchitoches-area retailers and the Cane River Green Market. Thibodaux began experimenting with his own spices and rubs about five years ago as he cooked for friends and family, giving bottles away as gifts. According to James' wife **Nina** (1994) the seasonings are being sold in the Natchitoches area at Nichols, People's Food Warehouse, Buddy's Grocery and Grill, French Market Express and Cane River Kitchenware. Thibodaux graduated from Northwestern in 1993 with a degree in biology and a minor in chemistry. Nina graduated in 1994 music education and flute performance. Thibodaux often cooks for his office staff and functions involving his children. "It's just a fun hobby gone crazy."

Save the Dates

*This spring,
Northwestern State University's
School of Creative
and Performing Arts
will present*

The President's Command Performance

an event to showcase
the talents of NSU students.

The event will take place

Friday, April 4.

Look for more details soon.

Spirit of Northwestern alumni and friends

should mark their calendars for

April 26-27

Plans are in the works for a special event to honor Bill Brent upon his retirement as director of the School of Creative and Performing Arts and director of bands. Details will be forthcoming as plans are finalized.

Nice Work If You Can Get It: Theatre grads shine in varied roles

Two Northwestern State theatre alumni wrapped up runs in Broadway shows earlier this year.

Correy West was a member of the cast of the musical comedy "Nice Work If You Can Get It," which had its final performance in June. Colin Trahan (2002) was part of the cast of "Jersey Boys" last spring.

Trahan was a swing cast member and was asked to play one of six parts in "Jersey Boys." On a given night, he may have portrayed a member of the Four Seasons, one of two principal cast members or been part of the ensemble. Trahan was familiar with the show as he was in the cast of "Jersey Boys," in San Francisco, at the Palazzo in Las Vegas and on tour.

"I thought about the teachers and those who helped me along the way," said Trahan. "It's the goal of every kid in American theatre to make it to

Broadway. I was thrilled and thankful for the opportunity."

Trahan lives in Los Angeles, performing improv comedy and occasionally appearing on the daytime drama General Hospital. He is also working with a production company planning to release a series of short films on the Internet each week.

"I was really excited to start. I let the company know it was a big deal for me to be there," said Trahan.

Trahan has appeared in "West Side Story," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Singin' in the Rain," "Anything Goes," "Cyrano De Bergerac," and "She Loves Me." He was in the national touring companies of "George M!," "Oklahoma!," "The Will Rogers Follies" and "The Producers."

An alumna of the Louisiana Scholars' College, Trahan recently visited Northwestern State for a talk as part of

the 25th anniversary of the Scholars' College and to conduct a workshop for theatre and dance students.

"Nice Work If You Can Get It" was West's second Broadway show. He was in the cast of the revival of "South Pacific." West was in the national touring companies of "42nd Street" and the "Radio City Christmas Spectacular." He was in the New York productions of "Lunch," "Kiss Me Kate," "Guys and Dolls" and "Paint Your Wagon."

Northwestern State alumnus Terry Lavell (2000) was on Broadway in "La Cage aux Folles" and was also in the show's national tour.

Theatre and Scholars' grad Victoria Olivier spent her second summer in Palo Duro Canyon, Texas, where she performed in the musical "Texas" and this past year was cast in two Shakespeare plays: Feste in "Twelfth Night" and Horatio in "Hamlet."



A crowd of well-wishers gathered July 27 to wish beloved Natchitoches businessman Johnny Antoon a happy 70th birthday during a party that benefited a Northwestern State University scholarship named in his honor. Antoon, a 1968 graduate of Northwestern State, owns Antoon's Package Liquor Store, opened in 1975, and The Student Body, opened in 1982. Since then, numerous students have helped pay for their college education by working for Antoon. The event raised more than \$10,000 for the Johnny Antoon Endowed Scholarship, initiated in 2008. From left are Danielle Antoon, Johnny and Merle Antoon and Michael and Alyson Antoon.



Several students turned out to show appreciation to Chesapeake Energy Corporation for their continued support of student scholarships. The company presented a gift to the NSU Foundation that will enable five Northwestern students to receive scholarships in the fall and spring semesters. Student must be a sophomore or junior with a grade point average of at least 2.75 to be eligible for the Chesapeake Energy Scholarship. From left are Chesapeake Public Affairs Manager Jeff Holliday, Cade Stepp, Alexia Mullally, Jack Fletcher, Vic the Demon, Brieann Duenas, Katie McCullin, manager of media relations and corporate development for Chesapeake; Assistant Director of Alumni and Development Vanner Erikson, Dylan Laborde, Anna Gasperecz, Sarie Joubert, manager of public affairs for Chesapeake; NSU President Dr. Randall J. Webb, Dr. Chris Maggio, executive director of the NSU Foundation, Faith Stanfield, Apryl Jenkins and John Simar. Since beginning operations in the Haynesville Shale in 2008, Chesapeake has provided scholarships for students demonstrating academic promise, personal character, financial need and community involvement.



Columns Fund to shore up severe funding losses, sustain NSU's future

The Northwestern State University Foundation is launching an initiative to sustain the university's role as an educational and cultural resource in northwest Louisiana. The Foundation created the Columns Fund giving program as a vehicle to fund programs and initiatives that support academic endeavors, scholarships, alumni programming, recruiting and retention.

"Northwestern State has not been immune to deep cuts in state funding," said Dr. Chris Maggio, executive director of the NSU Foundation. Dollars for university projects and programs previously provided by the state must now be generated through increased student tuition and an increase in private donations. "As our resources have diminished we find it necessary to refocus efforts in university development and are seeking partnerships from within the community. The Columns Fund is an opportunity for businesses and individuals to support Northwestern State as we continue a tradition of excellence established in 1884."

The Columns Fund, the university's main source of unrestricted dollars, is divided into two separate giving opportunities, the Founder's Circle and the Excellence Team. The financial commitment to join the Founder's Circle is at least a \$1,000 tax-deductible gift to the NSU Foundation, while the financial commitment to join the Excellence Team is any contribution under \$1,000.

"Our goal is to raise at least \$200,000 annually towards the Columns Fund between these two giving programs combined," Maggio said.

Funds generated by the Columns Circle will offer support for academic department and organizations, faculty and staff support, student scholarships, campus/community projects, faculty/staff recognition, alumni events, printing and postage for marketing materials, support for community and regional partnerships and enhances civil, cultural and educational and economic development endeavors. All contributions make a significant impact on Northwestern State's future, Maggio said.

For more information on levels of giving, e-mail Maggio at maggioc@nsula.edu or call the NSU Foundation at (318) 357-4414 or (888) 799 6486. Information is also available at northwesternalumni.com. All gifts are tax deductible and should be made payable to the NSU Foundation.

In Memory of Marla

Scholarship honors commitment to faith, family, nursing

Two Northwestern State University alumni contributed \$100,000 to be utilized for endowed scholarships in memory of their daughter, also a graduate of Northwestern State. The Marla Renee Coutee Thurman Endowed Memorial Scholarships will be presented to Catholic students pursuing careers in nursing. Ellis and Juanita Martinez Coutee of Baton Rouge established the scholarships in memory of Thurman, a registered nurse who worked for Willis-Knighton Health System in Shreveport for 27 years. Thurman passed away April 2, 2013, after a short battle with cancer.

In addition to being of the Catholic faith, full-time nursing students considered for the scholarships must maintain a B grade point average. Preference will be given to students from Caddo, Sabine, Rapides, Natchitoches and East Baton Rouge Parish.

Thurman was born in Baton Rouge and graduated from Broadmoor High School. She earned a degree in nursing at Northwestern State in 1986 and married Michael Thurman in 1988. The couple had two daughters. Thurman was a long-time member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Shreveport. She was a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nursing.

"Marla's priorities were God, her family and nursing," said Juanita Coutee, speaking of her daughter's devotion to her patients, including those in her own family. "Marla's dedication to her chosen profession of nursing inspired her husband and he subsequently attended NSU and is now a nurse. We hope the scholarships will bring many more dedicated, caring persons to nursing."

"Before Marla passed away, we visited her at her home and decided to create a scholarship for the College of Nursing, regardless of the outcome of her illness," Ellis Coutee said. "She had strong feelings about her faith. She was a devout Catholic and we decided to give preference to Catholic students, as well as preference to students who want to become a registered nurse and do what Marla did. She was committed to helping sick people. She was an excellent nurse."

Ellis Coutee is a native of Alexandria and graduated from Northwestern State with a degree in accounting in 1960. He was a senior agent and life/fire casualty insurance specialist in the Examination Division of U.S. Treasury Department for 30 years. He is an enrolled agent with Coutee and Coutee Tax Consultants in Baton Rouge. He is active in church and civic affairs as a member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church and a charter member of the St. Thomas More Knights of Columbus Council,



Alumni Ellis and Juanita Coutee of Baton Rouge created the Marla Coutee Thurman Memorial Scholarship in Nursing in memory of their daughter. Members of the Coutee family are, from left, Chris Volentine, Sarah Volentine, Jordan Lafargue, Juanita Coutee, Taylor Lafargue, Pamela Coutee Lafargue, Cheryl Coutee Volentine, Craig Lafargue and Ellis Coutee.

where he was a state officer for eight years. Mr. Coutee is also a member of the Downtown Lions Club and is life member of the Louisiana Lions Camp and the Louisiana Lions Eye Foundation.

Juanita Coutee, a native of Zwolle, graduated from Northwestern State in 1958 with a degree in mathematics and business with a minor in accounting. She earned a master's degree in mathematics in 1960 from Northwestern. She worked for Exxon Corp. in Baton Rouge for 33 years and was the company's first female professional employee and first female supervisor.

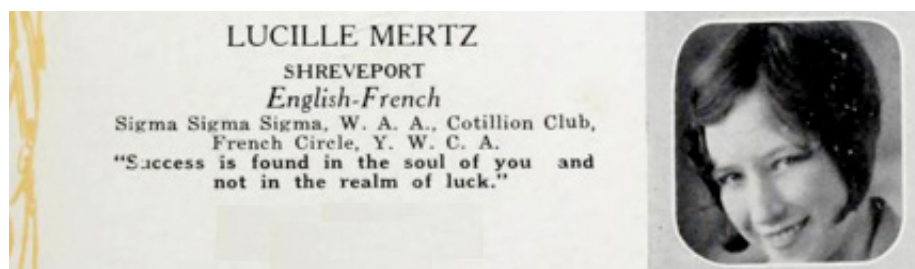
The Coutees previously assisted Northwestern by establishing the Ellis and Melva Juanita Martinez Coutee Endowed Professorship in Mathematics and an endowed scholarship for Northwestern State students in accounting, mathematics or nursing. They established the Dr. William Timon Endowed Professorship in Mathematics and the Clark-Wommack Endowed Professorship in Engineering Technology, and the deVargas, LaCaze, Pierson Endowed Professorship in Business. They established the Dudley Downing Scholarship and were instrumental in creating the Robert Easley Endowed Professorship in Accounting and the Dr. Kenneth I. Durr Endowed Professorship in Accounting. They also contribute to the Alumni Annual fund, President's Council, Elise P. James Campus Woman's Scholarship, Alumni Plaza, Hazel Sampit  Scholarship and athletic projects. The couple was inducted into the Northwestern State University Hall of Distinction, the Long Purple Line, as well as the School of Business Hall of Distinction.

"The Northwestern family shares in the grief of the Coutee family on the loss of their lovely daughter Marla, who will live on through these scholarships," said Northwestern State President Dr. Randall J. Webb. "It is very special for them to be able to make this gift and important to Northwestern State as we endeavor to obtain private funds for student scholarships."

Northwestern State announced the scholarships Aug. 17, lighting the Columns purple in memory of Thurman and in honor of the Coutees and their family.

For more information on the scholarship or to make a contribution, call the Northwestern State Alumni Center at (318) 357-4414 or visit northwesternalumni.com.

Pictured in the 1929 Potpourri, her name misspelled, Lucile Mertz Hendrick was a champion and advocate for students.



Anonymous gift honors memory of Lucile Hendrick



Lucile Hendrick, 1963

An anonymous donor made a significant contribution to the Northwestern State University Foundation in memory of Lucile Hendrick, a long-time administrator who was active in many campus and civic organizations during her long career. The donation will enhance outreach efforts coordinated through the NSU Foundation, including offering scholarship opportunities to students, said Dr. Chris Maggio, Northwestern State's assistant vice president of external affairs for university advancement.

Hendrick, often called "Miss Cissy," was born in 1909 in Texas and moved to Shreveport at an early age. She was in the first graduating class at C.E. Byrd High School, earning her diploma with honors. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English, French and History at Louisiana State Normal, as Northwestern State was then known, in 1929 and earned her Master of Education in Personnel, Guidance and Administration at Northwestern State College in 1958. As a student at Normal, she was a charter member of Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority and remained active in the sorority until her death.

In her early career, Hendrick taught for 15 years at Vivian, North Caddo and C.E. Byrd high schools. She was named dean of women at Northwestern State in 1963 having served as assistant dean since 1959. She retired from the position in 1974. She held offices in several professional organizations related to guidance and personnel and was sponsor to several women's organizations on campus, including Purple Jackets, Associated Women Students and the Panhellenic Council.

As an administrator, she was named Outstanding Dean of Women for Louisiana and was inducted into the C.E. Byrd High School Hall of Fame. She was inducted into Northwestern State's Alumni Hall of Distinction, the Long Purple Line, in 1998 and the NSU College of Education's Hall of Distinguished Educators in 2001. Among many honors, she received an honorary Nth Degree at Northwestern State, and was awarded citations from several Northwestern State student organizations, including the Student Government Association, Purple Jackets and Panhellenic, who created the Lucile Mertz Hendrick Panhellenic Foundation Scholarship. Tri Sigma Sorority created the Lucile Mertz Hendrick Outstanding Alumna Award in her honor.

"Mrs. Lucile was named a Tri Sigma Centennial Woman of Distinction by our national organization in 1998, which recognized the top 100 Tri Sigmas," said Reatha Cox, director of first year experience and leadership development. "She was forever giving to others. Although NSU no longer has a Dean of Women, she was a huge role model and mentor to me both as a Tri Sigma and as a student affairs professional. She was a very graceful woman and with her, every moment

was a learning moment."

Hendrick volunteered many hours in the community as a preservationist, philanthropist and member of several preservation and genealogy groups. She taught adult Sunday school at First United Methodist Church for 43 years and was a featured speaker on the Civil War and the American Revolution for numerous civic organizations.

Hendrick was named Outstanding Tour Guide of Louisiana and Outstanding Women of the Year for the city of Natchitoches. She was given a key to the city of Natchitoches and received the Mayor's Award for Service and the You Make a Difference Award from the Natchitoches Parish sheriff. She was also recognized by the V.A. Medical Center in Alexandria for her donation of 100 handmade quilts for patients.

She died Jan. 11, 2003, in Natchitoches at age 94. At her request, her cremated remains were spread at the base of the columns on the Northwestern State campus.

"She was a combination of intelligence, style, grace, enthusiasm and generosity," said Louie Bernard, a family friend. "How many people did you know like Lucile Hendrick? What a wonderful character she was. Nobody in our community committed more random acts of kindness. It gave meaning and purpose to her life. She was the embodiment of a person whose joy in life was in giving to others and never expecting anything in return."

Bernard said that although the Hendricks had no children, "Miss Lucile had a thousand children and nurtured them all of her life, from Byrd High School to Louisiana State Normal College to Northwestern State to Tri Sigma to the Sunday school class that was named for her. We were all her children."

60 years in the making, Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame now open



Click here to view the LPB
video of the grand opening.



Officials and special guests participated in the grand opening for the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame. On the front row from left are Sen. Gerald Long, Hall of Fame Chairman Doug Ireland, Iris Harper, Natchitoches Parish Tourist Commission; NSU President Dr. Randall J. Webb, Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne, Sharon Gahagan and Carolyn Harrington, Friends of the La. Sports Hall (FLASH), and Parish Council President Rick Nowlin. On the back row are Former Natchitoches Mayor Wayne McCullen, Mayor Lee Posey, Natchitoches Parish Sheriff Victor Jones, Jack Brittain Jr., Jerry Pierce and architect Frank Douglas.

Read the full article in the **Lagniappe** section at northwesternalumni.com/alumnicolumns.

N Club inductees will be honored during Homecoming

Eight outstanding competitors whose accomplishments are among the greatest in the rich sports history of Northwestern State University will be recognized on Homecoming day, Oct. 19, by the Graduate N Club Hall of Fame.

Among those inducted into the Hall of Fame will be two-time Olympian Kenta Bell, an All-America triple jumper for the Demons from 1996-2000; four-time All-Southland Conference softball outfielder Amy Grisham Calhoun, who played from 1990-93; and two football greats, defensive tackle Ferrell Yarbrough, team captain for the Demons as a senior in 1961; and All-America defensive end Greg Necaie, who still holds the school record with 28.5 quarterback sacks in just two seasons (1989-90).

Also to be enshrined: two record-smashing hitters in Demon baseball history, and two Southland "Players of the Year," Kyle Shade (1992-93) and Terry Joseph (1992-95) along with Lady Demon track and field distance record-holder Maryalyce Walsh Cox, who also starred in cross country from 1991-95.

A 1993 Hall of Fame inductee, basketball's Emma Ellerman Boozman, a star from 1973-76, will be presented the Graduate N Club's Distinguished Service Award recognizing her remarkable career as a high school coach. She retired in May after 26 seasons at Natchitoches Central High School and 36 seasons overall, ranking among Louisiana's all-time girls basketball coaching leaders with an 865-370 record.

They will be celebrated in a 10 a.m. ceremony at the Magale Recital Hall, and introduced that evening just after the national anthem is played prior to kickoff of the 6 p.m. football game at Turpin Stadium between the NSU Demons and longtime in-state rival Southeastern Louisiana. The morning ceremony is open to the public at no charge.

Enshrinement in the Graduate N Club Hall of Fame is the highest athletic honor awarded by Northwestern. The Graduate N Club is the association of former athletic letter winners at the university. Gil Gilson is the secretary-treasurer. A complete roster of Graduate N Club Hall of Fame members is on the Fan Central button on the NSUDemons.com website.



Lunch with Leon will laud retiring coach

An all-time reunion of Northwestern State track and field competitors, coaches and staff is set Saturday, Nov. 9, with the centerpiece event being “Lunch with Leon,” honoring recently retired coach Leon Johnson.

The 11 a.m. luncheon will be held in Prather Coliseum with the program focused on Johnson, who ended a remarkable 31-year tenure as head track and field coach with his July 3 retirement announcement.

“Lunch with Leon” will follow a 10 a.m. facility tour and ceremony at the Walter P. Ledet Track Complex and precedes the 3 p.m. home football game pitting the Demons against Lamar in Turpin Stadium. Early arrivals can participate in a Friday night reception Nov. 8 at Mama’s Oyster House in downtown Natchitoches.

A minimum donation of \$20 per person will cover expenses for lunch, football game tickets and a parking pass, and will support establishment of the Leon Johnson Endowed Track and Field Scholarship.

A registration button and a complete schedule are located at NSUDemons.com or can be obtained by contacting Adam Jonson, the associate athletic director at NSU, via e-mail at jonsona@nsula.edu or by calling 318-357-5251.

Former athletes and colleagues are invited to contribute content for a video presentation by contacting Doug Ireland, NSU’s assistant athletic director/sports information director, at ireland@nsula.edu or by calling 318-357-6467 by Oct. 1.

“I cannot even begin to express how much Leon has meant not only to the NSU track and field program, but to our athletics department, university, community and the state,” said Director of Athletics Greg Burke. “It has been the good fortune of so many – ranging from those in the Natchitoches community to NSU alumni to track coaches across the USA and especially for NSU track and field student-athletes - to have been touched by a genuine and dedicated gentleman like Leon who gave his heart and soul to them on a daily basis. Nobody worked harder and nobody cared more than Leon. The term ‘icon’ is certainly applicable to someone who has been so revered for his professionalism and knowledge.

“Focusing on just the Olympians, All-Americans, and other competitive success stories just scratches the surface of the impact that Leon had throughout his storied career. He was like a father to so many athletes, helping guide and encourage them.”

At NSU since the fall of 1982, Johnson coached 57 NCAA Division I All-Americans, including three NCAA or USA Track and Field champions and two USA Olympians, while winning nine conference championships. He was the only active Division I coach to have a home meet named in his honor, since the university rebranded its feature meet each season to The Leon Johnson NSU Invitational.

Johnson started the women’s track and field program at NSU in the mid-1980s. He has been the driving force for more than two decades in the annual Louisiana High School Athletic Association Cross Country Championships hosted each November at NSU’s Walter P. Ledet Track Complex, drawing tens of thousands of competitors and supporters to the community. He has volunteered his time and his program’s resources to annually assist causes such as Louisiana Special Olympics, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society and others. Under Johnson’s tenure, the Ledet Complex has also hosted countless district and regional high school track and field and cross country competitions.

“Northwestern State University and our sport will miss this icon in our worlds,” said Stewart Blue of Lafayette, a USA Track and Field Master Official. “Leon Johnson has been a highly respected coach and man of integrity who has molded thousands of lives throughout a storied coaching career. While he produced district and state champions as a prolific high school coach, conference champions and all-Americans as a renowned collegiate coach, his greatest gratification has been influencing the lives of young people and watching them grow into outstanding leaders, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and business people.

“Many will tell you they are who they are because of the lessons he taught and the opportunities he provided when inviting them to be a part of his track and field programs,” said Blue.

Baseball, softball reunion will take place during Homecoming

Alumni of Northwestern State's baseball and softball programs will gather Oct. 18-19 during 2013 Homecoming activities for the first joint reunion involving the sports, including a slow pitch softball game involving the Demons and Lady Demons.

Registration and a complete schedule for the reunion is on the events button of the NorthwesternAlumni.com website, the official site of the Northwestern State Alumni Association. The event is being co-hosted by the NSU Alumni Association and the NSU Athletic Association, along with the current baseball and softball coaching staffs.

"Talking with alumni from both programs, it is obvious there are a lot of friendships and some marriages involving baseball and softball players from the past, so the suggestion of doing a joint reunion for the two sports seems like a great idea," said Haley Blount, the associate director of alumni affairs. "Both programs have tremendous histories and a common bond. This will be fun and especially so during Homecoming weekend."

Highlights include a Friday evening social downtown at "Rockin' on the Riverbank" following the Homecoming parade at 5:30, intersquad games for both 2014 teams Saturday morn-

ing at 10 followed by lunch, and the 1 p.m. Alumni Game at the Lady Demon Diamond. Tailgating will follow the Alumni Game leading up to the 6 p.m. football game at Turpin Stadium between NSU and Southeastern Louisiana.

A reunion fee of \$25 per person, and \$5 for children under 12, is needed. Registration ends Oct. 15. The fee includes food, refreshments and a football game ticket. The direct link for a complete event schedule and registration is at northwesternalumni.com/baseballsoftball13 online. To reach Blount, email her at blounth@nsula.edu or call 318 357-4415.

CAPA photo studio named for Robert Crew

For more than 40 years, Robert Crew regarded photography as an enjoyable avocation. And now, he will be permanently associated with the teaching of photography.

Northwestern State University named the photographic studio in the Mrs. H.D. Dear and Alice E. Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts in recognition of Crew. Crew received the honor at a retirement reception held in the Orville Hanchey Art Gallery.

"For years I have been amazed at Robert's photographic creativity and ability to capture a moment," said Northwestern State President Dr. Randall J. Webb. "He has a love for photography and is enthusiastic about any opportunity to discuss photography and pass along some of what he has learned."

Webb praised Crew for his honesty, integrity and career-long dedication to students. The Northwestern State president presented Crew with resolutions passed by the Louisiana House of Representatives and Louisiana Senate commending Crew for his years of service to the people of Louisiana.



Click here to see a video of the salute to Robert Crew



Art student Annabell Jones photographed Robert Crew and family in the photography studio named in his honor. Crew retired in June.

Crew has been executive assistant to the president since 1997 and is retiring this month. He earned his bachelor's degree at NSU in 1965 and his Master's of Education at Northwestern State in 1968. A classroom teacher in Caddo and St. Mary's Parish from 1965 until 1970, Crew worked in the Louisiana State Department of Education from 1970 until 1997.

As executive assistant to the president, Crew helped obtain several enhancements to Northwestern State's

art program and the photographic studio.

Crew had two displays on exhibit in the Orville J. Hanchey Gallery at Northwestern State in 2009, "Here Comes the Bride: Four Decades of Bridal Fashion and Portraiture" and "Places and Faces: Photographs of Louisiana Architecture and Characters."

Crew was official photographer at two inaugurations of former Gov. Edwin Edwards and was photographer for the Louisiana Teachers Association.

Looking Back



The Young Woman's Study Club was organized by the young ladies of the Normal School in the winter of 1915 for the purpose of studying the history of the home, the modern sociological problems that affect the lives of young women and current topics. Miss Roberta Newell was in charge of the organization. During the winter and spring terms several prominent speakers addressed the club. Two of mention were Dr. Hazzard and Mr. Aage Fredricks, the former giving an extensive discussion of Shakespeare's women; the latter, of the place of women in the musical world.

Why I Love NSU

I love NSU because it always made the homesickness go away. The townspeople would feed us athletes when we were stuck at college during the holidays.

—**Lyndzee Greene McConathy** (2010, 2011)



To be known by name is a special quality that NSU offers. It allows individuals to be just that. Being able to walk back on campus and know you will get a sincere handshake or hug is why I love NSU. People truly care for your well-being.

—**Logan McConathy** (2010)



I love NSU because it is large enough to serve you, but small enough to know you. Some of my favorite memories include the 2006 NCAA basketball tournament and NSU 22 TV.

—**Coach John Smith** (2006)

In Memory

1941 – Marion Platt Cromwell Nesom, Aug. 2, 2013, Houston

1949 – Dr. James Paul Peters, April 19, 2013, Winnfield

1956 – Bert Heckel Sr., June 1, 2013, Homer

1959 – Jimmy Patterson, June 9, 2013, Bossier City

1962 – Willard G. Martin, Nov. 1, 2012, Kennedale, Texas

1967 – Donald Gray Horton, June 4, 2013, Coushatta

1986 – Susan Ann Churchwell Amos, May 27, 2013, Manila, Ark.

Kerry Friedman, June 4, 2013, Natchitoches

Sr. Janvier Williams, April 3, 2013, Sinsinawa, Wis.

Edwin McClung III, Aug 1, 2013, Natchitoches

Alumni Columns magazine is online with an extended version including the new **Lagniappe** section where more snippets, alumni spotlights, additional photos and video clips can be found. View the full magazine with the new online section at northwesternalumni.com/alumnicolumns.

Date _____

Name: (Miss, Mrs. Mr.) _____
Please Circle Last First Middle Maiden

Current address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

NSU undergraduate degree(s): _____ Year of graduation: _____

NSU graduate degree(s): _____ Year of graduation: _____

During which years did you attend NSU? _____

Place of employment _____ Job title: _____

Work phone: _____

Spouse's name: _____

Is your spouse an NSU graduate? Yes ☐ No ☐ Year of graduation: _____

Do you have children who are potential Northwestern students?

Please tell us their names, contact information, and what high school they attend.

Please return to: Alumni Center • Northwestern State University • Natchitoches, LA 71497

Guess Who



State Fair 1973 was celebrated by students and alumni of Northwestern State as this coed from Campti reigned over the annual clash against Louisiana Tech. Can you name her? The first five readers to call the Alumni Center at (318) 357-4414 will win a prize.

Answers to the Summer Edition of Guess Who, three pom pom girls and Vic the Demon from the 1972-73 Men's Basketball media guide, were Angie Jones, Margaret Zulick and Mary Blevins with photographer John Bennett as Vic the Demon. Those who guess correctly were:

Mary Odom, 1977

Margaret Zulick, 1973

Bubba Cordaro, 1973

Kathryn Maggio, 1979 and 1981

Lee Posey, 1974

HOMECOMING



2013 Schedule

Thursday, October 17

All Day - Alumni Art Show @ Hanchey Gallery (on display through Friday)

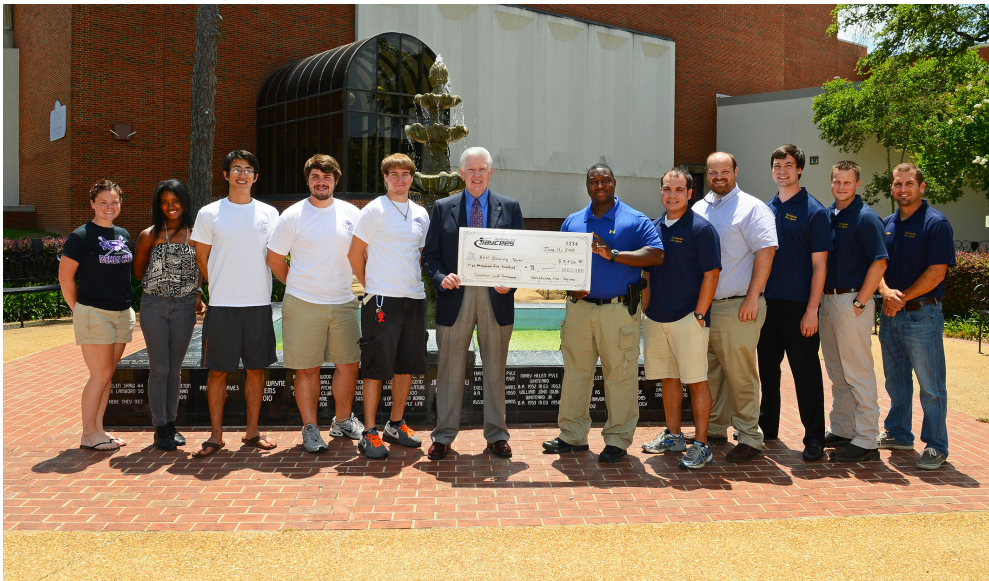
Friday, October 18

- 10:00 a.m. Alumni Association Board Meeting @ Caspari Hall Conference Room, 3rd floor
- 12:00 p.m. Homecoming Golf Tournament @ NSU Recreation Complex
- 1:30 p.m. NSU Foundation Board Meeting @ Caspari Hall Conference Room, 3rd floor
- 5:30 p.m. Homecoming Parade & Pep Rally
- 6:30 p.m. "Rockin' on the Riverbank" Homecoming Festival, Featuring live entertainment by MoJeaux (*free admission*)
- Freshman Connectors' Reunion @ Rockin' on the Riverbank (*a private tent space will be provided*)
- 7:00 p.m. Alpha Phi Alpha and Alpha Kappa Alpha meet & greet @ Natchitoches Country Club

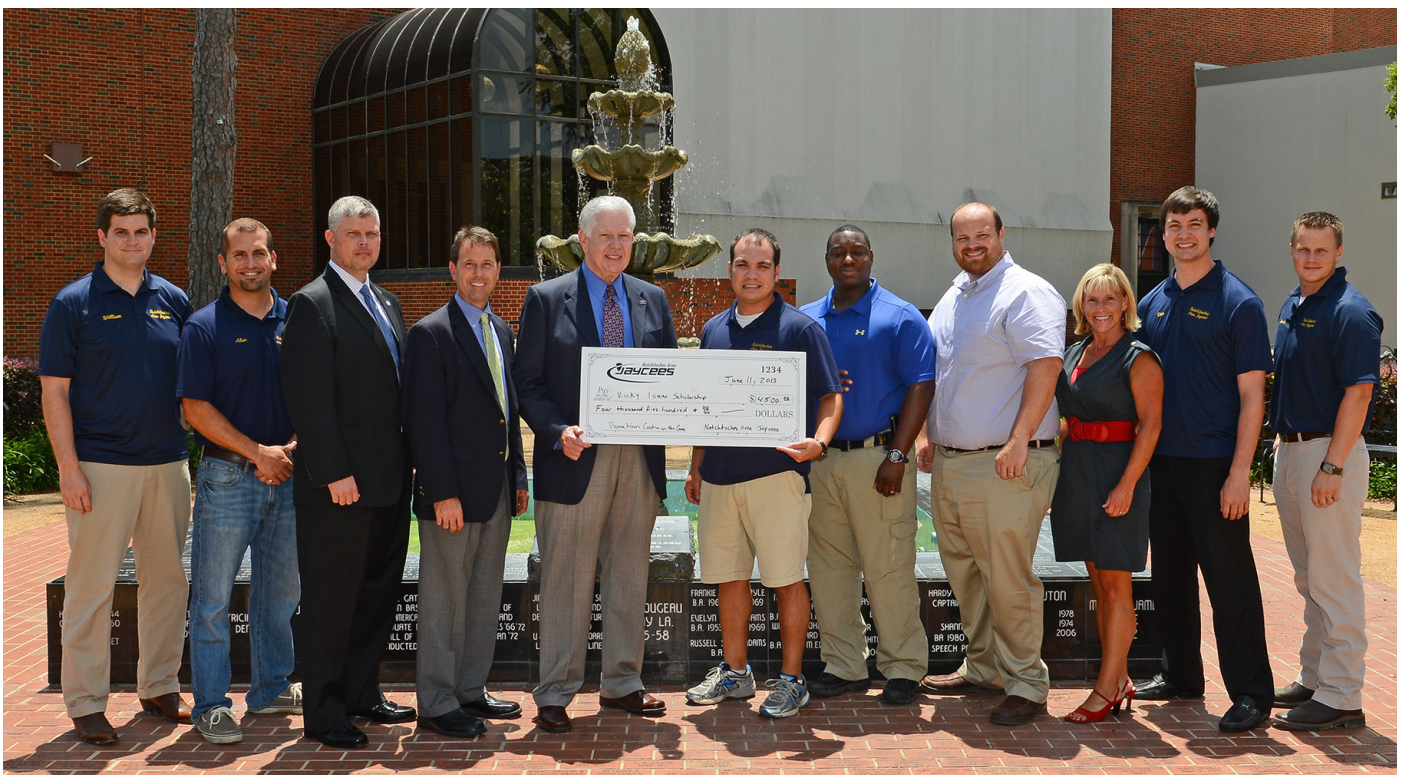
Saturday, October 19

- 8:00 a.m. Homecoming 5K/1 Mile Fun Run @ Collins Pavilion
- 9:30 a.m. "Cycling for Sharon" Bicycle Ride & Presentation @ NSU Alumni Plaza
- 10:00 a.m. N Club Hall of Fame Induction @ Magale Recital Hall
- College of Education & Human Development Reunion @ TEC (*Hall of Distinguished Educators Induction Ceremony beginning at 10:30 a.m.*)
- Demon Regiment Open House @ James A. Noe Military Science Bldg.
- NSU Baseball Fall World Series @ Brown-Stroud Field
- NSU Softball Purple & White game @ Lady Demon Diamond
- 10:30 a.m. Pi Kappa Phi Alumni business meeting @ Pi Kappa Phi Chapter House
- 11:00 a.m. School of Business Reception @ Russell Hall, Natchitoches Room (*School of Business Hall of Distinction Induction*)
- Sigma Sigma Sigma Open House with dedication ceremony to be held at 12:30 p.m. (*RSVP to coxr@nsula.edu*)
- 12:00 p.m. NSU BAA Reunion Picnic and Tailgating
- 1:00 p.m. Tailgating Activities @ Collins Pavilion/Demon Commons (*Entertainment to be provided by Melodime*)
- Alumni Game: Demon Baseball alumni vs. Lady Demon Softball alumni @ Lady Demon Diamond
- 5:30 p.m. Pregame Activities @ Turpin Stadium (*honorees will be recognized*)
- 6:00 p.m. Northwestern State vs. Southeastern @ Turpin Stadium
- 7:30 p.m. Halftime Ceremonies @ Turpin Stadium (*honorees will be recognized*)
- 9:00 p.m. NSU BAA Post-Game Mixer @ Hana Sushi Bar & Grill
- Alpha Phi Alpha and Alpha Kappa Alpha 40th anniversary banquet @ Natchitoches Country Club

Campus News



The Natchitoches Area Jaycees donated \$5,000 donation to the Northwestern State University Crew, having hosted a spring golf tournament to raise the money. Attending the donation ceremony were, from left, rowers Suni Poole, Nicole Plunkett, Derek Donald, Matthew Johanson and Jason Templet, Northwestern State President Dr. Randall J. Webb, Tournament Chair Jon Caliste, NSU Crew Coach Jason Stelly and Jaycees Josh Manual, Vanner Erikson, David Peddy and Alan Pasch.



The Natchitoches Area Jaycees donated \$4,500 raised at the Cookin' on The Cane Barbecue Festival to the Ricky Issac Jr. Scholarship Fund at Northwestern State University. The scholarship was established to honor the legacy of Issac, an alumnus of NSU's criminal justice program and a Natchitoches Parish sheriff's deputy at the time of his death in December 2012. The scholarship encourages students who are working toward their degree to use Issac's example and legacy as a model for their own future. Attending the donation ceremony were, from left, Jaycees Dr. Bill Luster and Alan Pasch, criminal justice faculty member Richard Hughbank, Assistant Vice President of External Affairs for University Advancement Dr. Chris Maggio, Northwestern State President Dr. Randall J. Webb, Jaycees Jason Stelly, Jon Caliste and Josh Manual, NSU Associate Director of Development Jill Bankston and Jaycees Vanner Erikson and David Peddy.

Athletic News

Weyerhaeuser supports softball facility renovation project

The Weyerhaeuser Foundation has issued a \$12,000 grant supporting Northwestern State athletics through a donation to the NSU Athletic Association toward the recently-completed Lady Demon softball grandstand renovation.

The project is being underwritten completely by funds outside of the NSU Athletic Department budget – either student fees designated for facility improvements or private donations. The total cost of the project, including architectural fees, was about \$500,000, said NSU director of athletics Greg Burke.

“The Weyerhaeuser Foundation’s support of the NSU softball grandstand project, as well as past support for other projects, is greatly appreciated and helps position the NSU athletic program for success,” said Burke.

“We are just beginning to scratch the surface in terms of feeling the impact of this softball project, as evidenced by the venue the new construction provided for the Southland Conference Tournament in May. Competing successfully at the Division I level takes an investment by the local community and Weyerhaeuser has always been there for local causes like this,” he said.

Burke expressed great appreciation for the endorsement and support provided by Steve Story, the local Weyerhaeuser plant manager.

Consideration for the Weyerhaeuser Foundation funding projects of this nature includes the fact that NSU is the educational, economic and cultural engine for a 12-parish area surrounding Natchitoches.

Naming opportunities starting at \$1,000 to permanently name a chair back are still available by contacting Burke or Adam Jonson, the executive director of the NSU Athletic Association, at (318) 357-5251.

The original bleacher-style seating at the Lady Demon Softball Complex was installed in when the facility opened in 1991. A small press box was added atop the grandstand in 1998.

The renovation project featured a grandstand with



The Northwestern State Athletic Association received a \$12,000 donation for the Lady Demon softball grandstand project completed in May. Shown from left at the check presentation in front of the new grandstand are Lady Demon softball player Cassandra Barefield, NSU softball coach Donald Pickett, Chris Egans and Anthony Ebard of Weyerhaeuser, NSU athletics director Greg Burke, and softball player Baylee Gray.

ADA-compliant seating for 400, 160 of which are chair backs. The grandstand is partially covered, providing welcome shade for day games.

It included relocation of the seating area up to the backstop, expanding and updating the press box to meet current media/technology needs, and adding a concession stand behind and underneath the seating area. The original concession stand, which was located in the softball locker room building, was eliminated two years ago as part of a locker room expansion project.

In addition to being used for NSU softball practices and competitions – including the 2013 Southland Conference Tournament won by the Lady Demons, propelling them to the NCAA Tournament – the facility is the site of local school, charity and organization-run events.



Some of the tournament staff and NSU Lady Demon basketball alumni gathered for a group photo Aug. 7 during the 25th anniversary Don't Die Wondering Golf Classic at Demon Hills. Shown are (left to right) former Lady Demon point guard Rachel Cunningham, incoming player Chelsea Rogers, former Lady Demon forward Becca Hayes, current player Jasmine Bradley, tournament co-founder David Stamey, co-head coaches Brooke and Scott Stoehr, current player Meredith Graf and assistant coach Kasondra Foreman. The annual event supports the Lady Demon basketball program. Retired head coach James Smith and Doug Ireland were the other co-founders. The unique name stems from a pregame speech by senior Angela Ortego to her teammates late in the 1989 season, which culminated with the Lady Demons' first NCAA Tournament experience. Ortego is now the women's basketball operations director at the University of Texas.



Sports Hall of Fame opens with fanfare

Art education graduate and former Demon baseball pitcher Hall of Fame artist Chris Brown visited with inductee Shaquille O'Neal during the grand opening. Brown, a NSU art education graduate and former Demon baseball pitcher, created portraits for the museum.

There's a stunning new jewel sparkling along the banks of Cane River Lake in historic downtown Natchitoches. The \$23 million Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum is playing to rave reviews after its star-studded Grand Opening on June 28 drew sports heroes, entertainment celebrities, a horde of media and public officials along with hundreds of enthusiastic visitors who were the first through the doors.

"A building this unique, there's nothing like it, maybe in the world," said Greg O'Quin (1973), the chairman of the Hall of Fame Foundation board. "I'd call it the Guggenheim on the Cane."

"What a fabulous edifice, what a beautiful place. It's an honor to be here for the Grand Opening," said internationally-renowned New Orleans chef John Folse. "I'm looking for the culinary wing! We've had the good fortune to serve so many of the sports stars who

are celebrated in here, so it's been especially fun to savor these exhibits and the stories that are told so well."

"They have built one beautiful facility here. It's been done extremely well," said 1959 Heisman Trophy winner Dr. Billy Cannon, the LSU football great and a 1976 Hall of Fame inductee.

"This building blows me away. I had no idea it would be anything like this. It's marvelous in every way. I don't even think the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton compares," said Paul Dietzel, the coach of the 1958 LSU national champion football team and a 1988 Hall inductee.

"There's smiles all around," said Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne. "Everybody is loving this place and kind of is in awe of the architectural beauty, and the tributes to the athletes and teams and events that are treasured memories for sports fans in Louisiana and elsewhere. The culture and historical significance of Northwest

Louisiana is part of what makes Louisiana unique, and the history wing of the museum is a great complement to the sports side of this facility."

The two-story, 27,500-square foot building is located at 800 Front Street, facing the traffic circle at the north end of Natchitoches' signature brick-paved main street.

Operated by the Louisiana State Museum system, it is open from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, and from 1-5 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is a modest \$5, a dollar less for senior citizens, military, and kids 12-18. Children under 12 are free. Group rates are available. School groups, including college students, are eligible for free admission that can be arranged in advance by calling the museum at 318-357-2491.

More information on the museum and the Hall of Fame itself is at the LaSportsHall.com website.

Alumni News

ALPHA REUNION SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Theta Chi and Eta Chi Chapters

40th Anniversary Celebration

October 18-20, 2013



Friday, October 18

Homecoming Parade
Homecoming Pep Rally
Registration, 7 p.m. Natchitoches Country Club
Meet and Greet, 7 p.m., Natchitoches Country Club

Saturday, October 19, 2013

Breakfast, 8-10 a.m. IHOP, Hwy. 6, Natchitoches
Registration and tailgating, Turpin Stadium
Group Photo, Chaplin's Lake
Homecoming Game, Turpin Stadium
40th anniversary banquet, Natchitoches Country Club
(Dressy attire – black suits and dresses)

Sunday, October 20, 2013

Breakfast on your own
Sunday School, 9 a.m., FBC-North Street
Church Service, 11 a.m., FBC-North Street

The NSU bookstore will be open
Friday until 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 10-2 p.m.

Foundation News

Better Business Bureau award supports future MBA students

The Better Business Bureau Serving Central Louisiana and the Ark-La-Tex established a scholarship at Northwestern State University to benefit a business administration major from their service area.

The Better Business Bureau Serving Louisiana and the Ark-La-Tex Scholarship is a \$400 award that will be presented to a student each fall and spring semester. Recipients must maintain a 3.0 or higher grade point average and intend to eventually earn a Master's of Business Administration, according to Andy Fisher, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau Serving Central Louisiana and the Ark-La-Tex.

"The Better Business Bureau is a non-profit, so if we make a profit from an activity, we take those funds as a goodwill measure and create scholarships," Fisher said.

The Better Business Bureau's mission is to create a community of trustworthy businesses, set standards for marketplace trust, encourage best practices, celebrate marketplace role models and denounce substandard marketplace behavior.

In addition to Northwestern State, the agency has created scholarships at other post-secondary institutions in the region.



Andy Fisher, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau Serving Central Louisiana and the Ark-La-Tex, right, coordinated the creation of a scholarship to benefit a business student at Northwestern State University. At left is Jill Bankston, associate director of development at NSU.

Burns scholarship benefits Anacoco student

During the May 2013 50-plus reunion, alumnus Billy John Burns of Bossier City contributed to a scholarship he created in 2011 to benefit a student from Anacoco High School. Burns established the Billy John and Judith Burns Scholarship in memory of his late wife in 2011. He graduated from Anacoco High School and attended Northwestern State where he earned a degree in education in 1954, a master's degree in 1958 and plus 30 in 1966.

"A member of my immediate family stated that it must cost thousands to fund a scholarship. Nothing could be further from the truth," Burns said. "My

scholarship recipient, Sydney Sterling, qualified for a TOPS scholarship, works part-time and, with the Burns Scholarship, will graduate without the burdensome student loans. She is on the Dean's List, too."

Burns and Sterling attended the university's Spring Scholarship Banquet, an event that recognizes scholarship recipients and their sponsors.

"I had the opportunity to converse with a student from Marksville. She shared her vision with me and how much she enjoyed the opportunity to attend NSU," Burns said. "I had the warmest feeling sitting there with

Sydney, reading our names in the program. It felt so great to have a part in such a wonderful program."

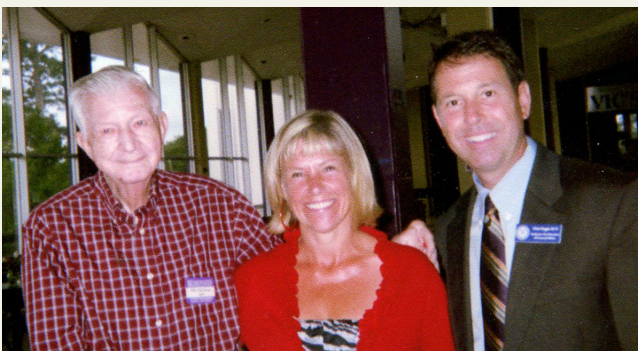
Born and reared in Anacoco, Burns taught at Anacoco High School for 31 years working at various times as a social studies teacher, librarian, assistant

principal, principal, girls basketball coach and co-sponsor of the yearbook. He retired for one year and moved to Shreveport, where he taught for 14 years at Calvary Baptist Academy and served as principal from 1990-2000. Events from his life and career are detailed in an autobiography, "One Last Stroll Down Memory Lane," completed in 2007.

"I have owned cars, houses and gone on vacations. These are worthy, to be sure, but they are temporal. The money I place in the scholarship is an investment in human beings and will return positive results forever," he said. "I want to encourage each of my fellow NSU graduates to consider establishing a scholarship fund."

Burns attends events at Northwestern State frequently and enjoys strolling through campus, snapping pictures.

"The campus is much larger now but the memories remain. My soul is totally engulfed by my days on campus during the 1950s. May it always be so."



Billy John Burns with Jill Bankston and Dr. Chris Maggio

Former students surprise Stevens in thanks for help

Former students, family and friends honored a retired Northwestern State University professor and his wife to acknowledge help and support they received from the couple while earning their undergraduate degrees. The students and the couple's family arranged a surprise reception in May to announce the creation of the Dr. Melvin and Ruth Stevens Helping Hand Scholarship, intended to help Northwestern State students who are struggling financially to stay in school.

Remarks by former students conveyed a common theme of overcoming hardships to attend college and benefitting not only from emotional and spiritual support Dr. and Mrs. Stevens offered, but also anonymous financial support. The students received scholarship money to cover expenses and only later realized who provided the support.

Robert Bice travelled from his home in Hawaii to be present for the scholarship announcement. Bice, who earned an undergraduate degree at Northwestern State in 1979 and eventually his MBA, said the anonymous gifts define the character of Dr. and Mrs. Stevens.

"His gift was multiplied exponentially," Bice said. "He set me up for a career and helped me get started. I want to say, 'Thank you, Dr. Stevens.'"

"My story is similar," said Steve Fletcher, who graduated in 1979 and has had a long career as an educator. "I had to have money to go to school. Without their help I may never have graduated. I've been a teacher all these years. The thing I remember most is their giving and caring. It was not just the money. Dr. Stevens was there when you were up against something. To me, he was a spiritual father. As a teacher, he was an example to me that I try to pass on to my students."

Randal Walker, who earned his degree in 1980, said Dr. Stevens talked him into enrolling at Northwestern



Friends, family and former students gathered to surprise Dr. Melvin and Ruth Stevens with a scholarship named in their honor. Seated from left are their daughter Marsha Bernard, Mrs. Stevens and Dr. Stevens. Standing are Dr. Chris Maggio, assistant vice president of External Affairs for University Advancement; Associate Director of Development Jill Bankston; the Stevens' daughter Dr. Kay Knotts and former students Randal Walker, Robert Bice and Steve Fletcher.

State, where he got a scholarship to perform with the campus group The Entertainers and received anonymous help. While talking with a friend later, Walker realized who was helping him and other students.

"We are just three or four folks who were just here for three or four years," he said.

The thing I remember most is their giving and caring. It was not just the money. Dr. Stevens was there when you were up against something. To me, he was a spiritual father.

Dr. Stevens taught agriculture, agronomy and soil sciences at Northwestern State. He also obtained his pilot's license, certification to conduct appraisals and a real estate license.

He described his own experiences struggling to earn a degree, working the night watch on campus and washing dishes to pay expenses. He later worked in a defense plant where he met his wife. He earned a degree in agriculture from the University of Arkansas and eventually his Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. During that time, he was also involved in church work, serving as Sunday school superintendent and other ministries.

Mrs. Stevens was also an industrious person, working as a postmistress and operating a hair salon before obtaining her real estate license.

"She was always concerned about caring for the needs of others," Walker said. "Their church was always their first priority. They are caring, sharing people who always made their house available."

The couple's generosity inspired the former students to help others. The scholarship was established through a \$10,000 donation.

"Dr. Stevens told me that the best way to thank someone for helping you is to help someone else," Bice said.

For more information on the Dr. Melvin and Ruth Stevens Scholarship or to make a contribution, contact Jill Bankston, associate director of Development at (318) 357-4241 or e-mail bankstonj@nsula.edu.